AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The Applicant respectfully requests approval of the amendments to Figure 1 shown in the "Replacement Sheet" submitted concurrently herewith. The Office Action requested a clearer depiction of a communication link in Figure 1. Figure 1 has been amended to label each of the characters 150, 151, 152, and 153 as "COMMUNICATION LINK". Communication link is disclosed in the specification at least in paragraphs [0015] and [0023]. No new matter is added. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Examiner is thanked for the performance of a thorough search. Claims 5, 8, 11-23, 28, 31, 38, and 41 have been amended. No claims have been added or canceled. Therefore, Claims 1-43 remain pending in the application. Each issue raised in the Office Action mailed July 10, 2007 is addressed hereinafter.

I.   ISSUES NOT RELATING TO PRIOR ART

A.   DRAWINGS

The Office Action objected to the drawings. The objection is addressed in the preceding section of this reply.

B.   SPECIFICATION – BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The Office Action states that the specification is objected to because "the required section entitled 'Brief Summary or General Statement of the Invention' is not included in the applicant's specification." This objection is respectfully traversed.

The Applicant respectfully submits that the Office Action is in error in asserting that a Brief Summary of the Invention is required. A "Brief Summary of the Invention" is **not required** by **either** of 37 CFR 1.73 or MPEP § 608.01(d).

Rule 1.73 states: "A brief summary of the invention indicating its nature and substance, which may include a statement of the object of the invention, *should* precede the detailed description. Such summary should, *when set forth*, be commensurate with the invention as claimed and any object recited should be that of the invention as claimed." (Emphasis added.) MPEP §608.01(d) merely reprints 37 CFR 1.73 and elaborates thereon, but MPEP §608.01(d) always using the permissive term *"should,"* including the statement that "the subject matter of the invention *should* be described in one or more clear, concise sentences or paragraphs."

(Emphasis added.) Thus, neither of 37 CFR 1.73 nor MPEP § 608.01(d) require a patent application contain a "Brief Summary of the Invention" section.

The term "*should*" is used in 37 CR 1.73 and the MPEP in the advisory sense, not the mandatory sense as with the terms "shall" or "must." If a summary were required, then these two rules and the MPEP would use the mandatory term of "shall" or "must." For example, 37 CFR 1.63 states that "An oath or declaration filed…must:" includes a number of items listed therein, and 37 CFR 1.75 states that "The specification must conclude with a claim…," and therefore both of those citations are requirements that must be met. However, 37 CFR 1.73 and MPEP §608.01(d) do not include such mandatory terminology, and rather use instead the permissive term "should," thereby indicating that **a summary is not required**.

For the reasons set forth herein, the Applicant respectfully submits that there is no basis in law, rule, or the MPEP for requiring the inclusion of a Brief Summary of the Invention, and therefore the Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to the specification for lacking a Brief Summary of the Invention be withdrawn.

C.   SPECIFICATION – INFORMALITIES

The disclosure was objected to because of an informality. The Examiner is thanked for identifying the informality in the Office Action mailed July 10, 2007. The Office Action states that "On line 3 of par [0033], the applicant references figure 310 as being the step labeled to transmit the XML document, but figures 210 and 304 of the drawing are labeled to perform the fore mentioned step." Office Action, p. 3. Accordingly, in the specification, line 3 of paragraph [0033] has been amended to replace "step 310" with "step 210". No new matter has been added. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

D.   CLAIMS 3, 5-24, 26-43 – OBJECTIONS TO INFORMALITIES

Claims 3, 5-24, and 26-43 are objected to because of alleged informalities.   The

Examiner is thanked for providing suggested corrections to these claims in the Office Action.

Applicants respectfully submit that by amending claims as set forth herein, the applicants have

overcome the objections to the claims. Removal of the objections is requested.

E.   CLAIMS 1-43 – 35 U.S.C. § 101 – TANGIBLE OUTPUT

Claims 1-43 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as allegedly directed to non-statutory

subject matter.   The Office Action states that the feature of "providing the identified network

device OS operation and the prepared data in a callback" is non-statutory because the "applicant

failed to specify a correlating result as to where or how the prepared data would be stored once

transmitted to the selected one or the several network device OS components". Office Action, p.

13. The Office Action further states that the claims "lack tangible output because the claim[s]

fail to mention the events that occur thereafter between the transmitted operation and data and the

one of several network device OS components once the data is transmitted." The rejection is

respectfully traversed.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Office Action is in error in asserting that Claims

1-43 are directed to non-statutory subject matter because Claims 1-43 provide a concrete and

tangible result through data transformation in computer memory.

There is no requirement that each and every limitation of a claim must produce a tangible

result. According to MPEP § 2106, IV.C.2.(2), in making a determination whether a claim

produces a tangible result, the focus is not on whether the steps taken to achieve a particular

result are tangible, but rather on whether the final result achieved by the claimed invention is

tangible. Applicants' claims provide such a concrete and tangible final result. For example,

anyone of ordinary skill in the pertinent art would understand "providing the identified network device operating system operation and the prepared data in a callback to the selected one of the several network device operating system components" to refer to transferring the operation and the prepared data from one area of computer memory to another area of computer memory that is accessible to the selected components. Claim 1 recites a computer-implemented method, and a computer implementation of the "providing" step would involve moving the recited data in a callback to the components as part of ordinary operation of the host computer. Such a transfer of data results in a concrete and tangible change in the state of computer memory. Therefore, the Office Action is in error in asserting that the **specific limitation** of "providing the identified network device OS operation and the prepared data in a callback" is non-statutory.

Applicant can find no authority or basis in the MPEP or elsewhere for the alleged requirement stated in the Office Action that in order to produce a tangible result the claims must specify a correlating result as to where or how the prepared data would be stored once transmitted to the selected one or the several network device OS components. At best, the Office Action can be read to state that Claims 1-43 recite non-statutory functional descriptive material *per se*. This is incorrect. Claims 1-43 recite computer-implemented steps that necessarily function to receive specified data in computer memory, perform operations on the data, change the data, and transfer the data in computer memory. Each independent claim in the application, and thus all claims dependent thereon, recite similar features and thus claim statutory functional descriptive material.

Consequently, Applicant respectfully submits that there is no *prima facie* showing in the record that Claims 1-43 do not set forth patentable subject matter. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

F.   CLAIMS 11-23 – 35 U.S.C. § 101 – CARRIER WAVE

Claims 11-23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as allegedly being directed to

non-statutory subject matter. The Office Action states that "With respect to claims 11-23, the

'computer-readable medium,' in accordance with the applicant's specification, may be a carrier

wave. This subject matter is not limited to that which falls within a statutory category of

invention because it is not limited to a process, machine, manufacture, or a composition of

matter." This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Present Claims 11-23 recite "A machine-readable **storage** medium…" Examples of

storage media described in the application include "a floppy disk, a flexible disk, hard disk,

magnetic tape, or any other magnetic medium, a CD-ROM, any other optical medium,

punchcards, papertape, any other physical medium with patterns of holes, a RAM, a PROM, and

EPROM, a FLASH-EPROM, any other memory chip or cartridge," as described in the

application, paragraph [0056]. All such storage media constitute a statutory "apparatus" or

"manufacture." Present claims 11-23 exclude a carrier wave. The Applicant respectfully

submits that the rejections are fully addressed. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

II.   ISSUES RELATING TO PRIOR ART

A.   CLAIMS 1, 11, 14, 24 – BEADLES

Claims 1, 11, 14, and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly anticipated

by Beadles, et al., (Pub# US 2003/0037128) ("*Beadles*"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

To anticipate a claim, the cited reference must teach each and every element of the claim.

MPEP § 2131. As explained hereinafter, each pending claim recites at least one feature that is

not disclosed, taught, or suggested by *Beadles*. Therefore, the rejection is overcome.

Claim 1 features:

"A method of processing a network device operating system operation, the method

comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

receiving the network device operating system operation and associated data within an

Extensible Markup Language (XML) document;

parsing the XML document to identify the network device operating system operation;

selecting one of several network device operating system components that can

process the identified network device operating system operation;

preparing the associated data for use by the selected one of several network device

operating system components; and

providing the identified network device operating system operation and the

prepared data in a callback to the selected one of the several network device

operating system components." (Emphasis added.)

1.   The device plug-in framework disclosed in *Beadles* does not teach or fairly
suggest "**selecting** one of several network device operating system
components that can process the identified network device operating
system operation"

Claim 1 features an approach for processing a network device operating system operation

wherein a network device operating system component is **selected** to process the network device

operating system operation. For example, in Figure 3, a programmatic agent **selects**, for each

network device operating system operation received, one or more network device operating

system components that are required to process the operation. In the embodiment, if the

operation involves an object, a method, or an attribute on a component, the programmatic agent

can determine that the object, method, or attribute is associated with the component using

information obtained from a prior registration by the component. See Application, paragraphs

[0025-003] ("Registration of the Component with the Programmatic Agent"). Through this

determination the programmatic agent **selects** one or more components as components that can

process the operation. See Application, paragraphs [0037-0042].

Note that the programmatic agent disclosed in the embodiment does not merely deliver an operation to a component specified by the operation. Rather, it **selects** one or more components to process the operation based on which components support objects that are implicated by the operation.

In contrast to the approach of Claim 1, *Beadles* teaches a device plug-in framework that supports a push model or a pull model for **delivering** policy to a specified edge device. See Beadles, ¶ [0046-0052]. Under the push model taught in *Beadles*, the plug-in receives an event from an event manager, fetches a policy for the edge device, translates the policy to a format supported by the edge device, and then delivers the policy to the edge device. Beadles, paragraphs [0048-0050]. The pull model operates similar to the push model except the event comes from the edge device instead of from the event manager. Beadles, paragraph [0048]. Nowhere in *Beadles* is it disclosed, taught, or suggested that the device plug-in, in response to an event, **selects** one or more edge devices to process the policy, as claimed. Rather, the device plug-in merely delivers the policy to the edge device specified in the event. See Beadles, paragraph [0050] (stating "**Information contained in the event from the event manager** will allow the plug-in to request the policy from the Policy Fetcher. In addition to policy, the plug-in may need to request the base configuration for the edge device." (Emphasis added.)) Therefore, whether supporting a push model or a pull model for delivering policy to an edge device specified in an event, the device plug-in framework disclosed in *Beadles* does not **select** one of several network device operating system components that can process a network device operating system operation.

2.   The provisioner disclosed in *Beadles* does not teach or fairly suggest "providing the identified network device operating system operation and the prepared data **in a callback** to the **selected** one of the several network device operating system components"

Claim 1 is directed in part to an approach for processing a network device operating system operation wherein the operation is provided to a selected network device operation system component **in a callback**. For example, in applicants' Figures 1, 2 and 3, Component 140 registers with programmatic agent 130 to facilitate communication between component 140 and programmatic agent 130. To register with programmatic agent 130, component 140 supplies programmatic agent 130 with a data model that describes the schema to which all the objects, attributes of the objects, and methods on the objects supported by component 140 correspond. Application, paragraph [0029]. According to the embodiment, the operation is provided to component 140 using a **callback** established when component 140 registered with programmatic agent 130. In the embodiment, the **callback** may communicate with the one or more method handlers or the one or more attribute handlers resident in the component 140 that was described in the data model registered with the programmatic agent 130. Application, paragraph [0042].

Beadles does not disclose, teach, or suggest the feature of **providing in a callback** for at least two reasons. First, as discussed above, the device plug-in framework, of which the provisioner is a part, does not **select** one of several edge devices to process a policy. Therefore, the provisioner does not provide the policy to a **selected** edge device.

Second, while *Beadles* discloses providing policy and configuration data to edge devices, *Beadles* does not provide the policy and data in the manner of Claim 1. In the portion of *Beadles* cited by the Office Action regarding this providing limitation, policy and data are provided to edge devices by the device plug-in framework. See Beadles, paragraphs [0047-0053]. In contrast to Claim 1, the edge devices disclosed in *Beadles* do not establish **a callback** with the

device plug-in framework by which the device plug-in framework can provide policy and data.

Instead, the device plug-in framework disclosed in *Beadles* utilizes intermediate device plug-ins

wherein there is an intermediate device plug-in for each type of edge device (e.g., Cisco Router

or Windows Services Gateway) and each intermediate device plug-in contains logic for providing

the policy and configuration data to be downloaded to the edge device. <u>Beadles</u>, paragraph

[0047-0062] (disclosing a Windows Device Plug-In that contains logic for providing policy and

data to be downloaded to a Windows Device and a Cisco Router Device Plug-In that contains

logic for providing policy and data to be download to a Cisco Router). The plug-ins of *Beadles*

are not "callbacks" as claimed. Thus, unlike Claim 1 which "learns" how to provide the

operation and data to the selected network device operating system component through a

callback established by the selected network device operating system component, the device

plug-in framework disclosed in *Beadles* contains intermediate device plug-ins that "inherently

understand" how to provide policy and data to specific types of edge devices.

For at least the above reasons, *Beadles* does not disclose, teach, or suggest the limitations

of Claim 1. As at least one element is not disclosed, taught, or suggested by *Beadles*, Claim 1 is

patentable over the cited art and is in condition for allowance.

<u>CLAIMS 11, 14, 24</u>

Independent Claims 11, 14, and 24 recite features similar to the features recited by Claim

1 that is deemed to be in condition for allowance. Therefore, Claims 11, 14, and 24 are

patentable over *Beadles* for at least the reasons given above for Claim 1. Reconsideration and

withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 11, 14, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 is respectfully

requested.

B.   CLAIMS 2, 15, 25, 35 – BEADLES IN VIEW OF PAUL

Claims 2, 15, 25, and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being allegedly

unpatentable over *Beadles* in view of Paul, et al., (Pat # US 7,013,329) ("*Paul*"). This rejection

is respectfully traversed.

Claims 2, 15, 25, and 35 depend directly or indirectly from an independent claim

previously discussed. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 2, 15, 25, and 35 are

allowable for at least those reasons given above with respect to the corresponding independent

claims previously discussed. Further, with regard to Claims 2, 15, 25, and 35, the Office Action

relies on *Paul* **solely** to teach "creating a responsive XML document that contains the responsive

data in XML format and sending the responsive XML document to a network management

application", and *Paul* does not "fill the gaps" of *Beadles*. Therefore, any combination of

Beadles and *Paul* cannot provide the complete subject matter that is recited in the pending

claims. Consequently, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 with respect to Claims

2, 15, 25, and 35 is respectfully requested.

C.   CLAIMS 3, 16, 26, 36 – BEADLES IN VIEW OF PAUL

Claims 3, 16, 26 and 36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being allegedly

unpatentable over *Beadles* in view of *Paul*. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 3, 16, 26, and 36 depend directly or indirectly from an independent claim

previously discussed. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 3, 16, 26, and 36 are

allowable for at least those reasons given above with respect to the corresponding independent

claims previously discussed. Further, with regard to Claims 3, 16, 26, and 36, the Office Action

relies on *Paul* **solely** to teach "wherein the XML document is received within a transport protocol

message that conforms to one of several transport protocols, and further comprising the step of

extracting the XML document from the transport protocol message", and *Paul* does not "fill the gaps" of *Beadles*. Therefore, any combination of *Beadles* and *Paul* cannot provide the complete subject matter that is recited in the pending claims. Consequently, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 with respect to Claims 3, 16, 26, and 36 is respectfully requested.

D.   CLAIMS 5, 13, 18, 28, 38 – BEADLES IN VIEW OF SHAH

Claims 5, 13, 18, 28, and 38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being allegedly unpatentable over *Beadles* in view of Shah et al., (Pat # US 6,041,325) ("*Shah*"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 5, 13, 18, 28 and 38 depend directly or indirectly from an independent claim previously discussed. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 5, 13, 18, 28, and 38 are allowable for at least those reasons given above with respect to the corresponding independent claims previously discussed. Further, the Office Action relies on *Shah* **solely** to teach "validating data associated with the network device OS operation and mapping the data to one or more data structures that are associated with the function", and *Shah* does not "fill the gaps" of *Beadles*. Therefore, any combination of *Beadles* and *Shah* cannot provide the complete subject matter that is recited in the pending claims. Consequently, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 with respect to Claims 5, 13, 18, 28, and 38 is respectfully requested.

E.   CLAIMS 6, 19, 29, 39 – BEADLES IN VIEW OF NGUYEN

Claims 6, 19, 29, and 39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being allegedly unpatentable over *Beadles* in view of Nguyen (Pat # US 5,396,626) ("*Nguyen*"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 6, 19, 29, and 39 depend directly indirectly from an independent claim previously discussed. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 6, 19, 29, and 39 are allowable for

at least those reasons given above with respect to the corresponding independent claims previously discussed. Further, with regard to Claims 6, 19, 29, and 39, the Office Action relies on *Nguyen* **solely** to teach "receiving a query from a network management application about the several network device OS components that are supported and providing a response to the network management application that identifies one or more of the several network device OS components that are supported", and *Nguyen* does not "fill the gaps" of *Beadles*. Therefore, any combination of *Beadles* and *Nguyen* cannot provide the complete subject matter that is recited in the pending claims. Consequently, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 with respect to Claims 6, 19, 29, and 39 is respectfully requested.

> F.   CLAIMS 7, 20, 30, 40 – BEADLES IN VIEW OF NGUYEN

Claims 7, 20, 30, and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being allegedly unpatentable over *Beadles* in view of *Nguyen*. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 7, 20, 30, and 40 depend directly or indirectly from an independent claim previously discussed. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 7, 20, 30, and 40 are allowable for at least those reasons given above with respect to the corresponding independent claims previously discussed. Further, with regard to Claims 7, 20, 30, and 40, the Office Action relies on *Nguyen* **solely** to teach "receiving a query from a network management application about one or more of several objects that are supported by the several components and providing a response to the network management application that identifies one or more of the objects that are supported", and *Nguyen* does not "fill the gaps" of *Beadles*. Therefore, any combination of *Beadles* and *Nguyen* cannot provide the complete subject matter that is recited in the pending claims. Consequently, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 with respect to Claims 6, 19, 29, and 39 is respectfully requested.

G.   CLAIMS 8, 21, 31, 41 – BEADLES IN VIEW OF SHELL

Claims 8, 21, 31 and 41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being allegedly

unpatentable over *Beadles* in view of Shell et al., (Pub # US 2003/0018764) ("*Shell*"). This

rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 8, 21, 31, and 41 depend directly or indirectly from an independent claim

previously discussed. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 8, 21, 31, and 41 are

allowable for at least those reasons given above with respect to the corresponding independent

claims previously discussed. Further, with regard to Claims 8, 21, 31, and 41, the Office Action

relies on *Shell* **solely** to teach "receiving a query from a network management application about

one or more of several methods that are supported by the objects and providing a response to the

network management application that identifies one or more of the methods that are supported",

and *Shell* does not "fill the gaps" of *Beadles*. Therefore, any combination of *Beadles* and *Shell*

cannot provide the complete subject matter that is recited in the pending claims. Consequently,

withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 with respect to Claims 8, 21, 31, and 41 is

respectfully requested.

H.   CLAIMS 9, 22, 32, 42 – BEADLES IN VIEW OF SHELL

Claims 9, 22, 32, and 42 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being allegedly

unpatentable over *Beadles* in view of *Shell*. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 9, 22, 32, and 42 depend directly or indirectly from an independent claim

previously discussed. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 9, 22, 32, and 42 are

allowable for at least those reasons given above with respect to the corresponding independent

claims previously discussed. Further, with regard to Claims 9, 22, 32, and 42, the Office Action

relies on *Shell* **solely** to teach "receiving a query from a network management application about

one or more of several attributes that are supported by the methods and providing a response to

the network management application that identifies one or more of the attributes that are

supported", and *Shell* does not "fill the gaps" of *Beadles*. Therefore, any combination of *Beadles*

and *Shell* cannot provide the complete subject matter that is recited in the pending claims.

Consequently, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 with respect to Claims 9, 22,

32, and 42 is respectfully requested.

     I.   CLAIMS 10, 23, 33, and 43 – BEADLES IN VIEW OF SLAUGHTER

     Claims 10, 23, 33 and 43 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being allegedly

unpatentable over *Beadles* in view of Slaughter et al., (Pat # US 6,970,869) ("*Slaughter*").

     Claims 10, 23, 33, and 43 depend directly or indirectly from an independent claim

previously discussed. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 10, 23, 33, and 43 are

allowable for at least those reasons given above with respect to the corresponding independent

claims previously discussed. Further, with regard to Claims 10, 22, 33, and 43, the Office Action

relies on *Slaughter* **solely** to teach "receiving an invocation from a network management

application about or more of several methods that are supported by one or more objects of the

several components and invoking the one or more methods through a callback to one or more of

the components", and *Slaughter* does not "fill the gaps" of *Beadles*. Therefore, any combination

of *Beadles* and *Slaughter* cannot provide the complete subject matter that is recited in the

pending claims. Consequently, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 with respect to

Claims 10, 22, 33, and 43 is respectfully requested.

     J.   CLAIM 12 – BEADLES IN VIEW OF SLAUGHTER

     Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being allegedly unpatentable over

Beadles in view of *Slaughter*. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 12 depends directly from independent Claim 11. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 12 is allowable for at least those reasons given above with respect to Claim 11 previously discussed. Further, with regard to Claim 12, the Office Action relies on *Slaughter* **solely** to teach "component XML logic that implements one or more of the callbacks to which the identified network device OS operation and the prepared data are provided by the programmatic agent infrastructure logic and component API logic that provides an API for one or more functions of the network device OS component", and *Slaughter* does not "fill the gaps" of *Beadles*. Therefore, any combination of *Beadles* and *Slaughter* cannot provide the complete subject matter that is recited in the pending claims. Consequently, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 with respect to Claim 12 is respectfully requested.

K.   CLAIM 34 – BEADLES IN VIEW OF BRADLEY

Claim 34 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being allegedly unpatentable over *Beadles* in view of Bradley et al., (Pat # US 6,957,256) ("*Bradley*"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 34 recites features similar to the features recited by Claim 1 that is deemed to be in condition for allowance. Therefore, Claim 34 is patentable over *Beadles* for at least the reasons given above for Claim 1.

Further, the Office Action relies on *Bradley* **solely** to teach "a network interface that is coupled to a data network for receiving one or more packet flows, a processor, and one or more stored sequences of instructions", and *Bradley* does not "fill the gaps" of *Beadles*. Therefore, any combination of *Beadles* and *Bradley* cannot provide the complete subject matter that is recited in the pending claims. Consequently, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 with respect to Claim 34 is respectfully requested.

L.   REMAINING CLAIMS

The pending claims not discussed so far are dependant claims that depend on an independent claim that is discussed above. Because each dependant claim includes the features of claims upon which they depend, the dependant claims are patentable for at least those reasons the claims upon which the dependant claims depend are patentable. Removal of the rejections with respect to the dependant claims and allowance of the dependant claims is respectfully requested. In addition, the dependent claims introduce additional features that independently render them patentable. Due to the fundamental differences already identified, a separate discussion of those features is not included at this time.

III.   CONCLUSION

For the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that all of the pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Therefore, the issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance is believed next in order, and that action is most earnestly solicited.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is believed that such contact would further the examination of the present application.

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Please charge any shortages or credit any overages to Deposit Account No. 50-1302.

Respectfully submitted,

Hickman Palermo Truong & Becker LLP

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